2024 election postmortem: why Trump won

Some of what follows is a highly condensed restatement of conclusions argued for in my series of writeups from 2023 – "Magical thinking about democracy." That was an examination of what is wrong with "electoral representative democracy" as it is practiced, and what might be done about it. Here we discuss a concrete illustration of what happens when democracy gets too "magical."

Trump | the consummate politician

Trump expertly trolled the democrats. They swallowed his performance hook, line, and sinker, thinking the joke was on Trump (e.g., pet-eating, etc.). Competence has nothing to do with being a good person. It has to do with being good *at* something: in political contexts, this means moving masses to think you are the *least* bad of their options. The democrats have shown themselves to be bent on nearly nothing but defending a status quo the corruption of which they seemed oblivious… and the contest with Trump showed *even at this* they failed.

Biden | the nude emperor

Just how *in-your-face* can a lie get? Biden's unelected, unnameable (except, perhaps, his wife) string-pulling advisory entourage, bought, sold, cajoled, and successfully coached traditional mouthpieces of "objective" virtue (mainstream media) to repeat *again and again* that he – Biden – was "on fire," "at the top of his game," suggesting even that he was "able to answer his own phone"; in short, that Biden was as sharp as required for leading the most powerful nation on earth. The name for this is "gaslighting."[1] Political history books will document that, while hardly the first instance of mass gaslighting, the democratic party's performance, throughout Biden's term, but especially in the lead up to the 2024 election, will go down as a paradigm case of gaslighting. There is ample evidence that the average American is not well-informed about their government, certainly… but their stupidity has its limits, and the democrats pushed it past the breaking point... Even a child might remark on the leader's penis.

1. For purposes of this discussion, "to gaslight" is to manipulate the frames of reference and leverage the weakness of cognitive function to its detriment. The idea is usually deployed with the assumption that the manipulator has agency. But agency is optional. A mirror is sometimes sufficient... The term comes from the 1944 film *Gaslight*. "Many in the main stream media are finally admitting that they got rolled big time by Biden's handlers." "The lie of the year," *The Hill*, 31 December 2024.

Harris | handmaid to the nude emperor

What about Harris? The kindest thing we can say for her is that she was an opportunistic assistant to the demented puppet of string-pullers. Maybe she can't be blamed for inheriting, belatedly, the role of band-aid for a political project requiring major surgery. And, thanks to those incompetent, unelected, string-pulling content-to-be-behind-the-scenes-power-brokers, she didn't occupy her position long enough to contribute much of her own to the general incompetence.

Which liar to vote for?

It is hardly news that politicians lie. It is slightly more newsworthy that mainstream media is so onboard with a lockstep orgy of dis-, mis-, or mal-information.[2] As for the *non*-mainstream media, there, at least, we may still find variety among untruths from which to choose. Social epistemologists, such as J. S. Mill, long ago argued that such a mashup of "truthiness" may be as good as it gets.

Trump won, why?

I guess because the lies of an actor in a patent farce were somehow perceived as less pernicious than those of a man who was not well in the head or, rather, the lies of his "care-giver" assistants. Not to suggest that the competent actor was any less a puppet than the confirmed one, but the *real* string-pullers know better than to run for office. You cannot act in a farce with a cast of millions without great resources. The "string-pullers" are precisely that because they have the resources that the leads in the farce require to perform at all. The string-pullers needn't be great actors themselves when they can hire them.

Neither *political* party won or lost. Political parties are *so* vain; they probably think the competition is about them... when, in fact, it has become a dispute between a larger *economic* party of envious *near*-billionaires and a smaller one of accomplished *multi*-billionaires. Unless one or the other of these parties includes you, your ballot is as valuable as your used toilet paper. This time the richer cohort won. It is the "income inequality" between these *economic* classes (not any class likely to include you) that matters.

Prayer is always an option for those excluded from an effective voice in governance, but the system insures that "the rich you shall have always with you."[3] Present yourself as abject and you may hope one of these significant competing oligarchic cohorts takes pity on you. Rich people are not evil – *worse*, they are just human. Historically, the *super* rich have been known, when it suits them, to ally themselves with the rabble (us) against the collective threat of the *merely* rich.

I am not suggesting there are no "true believers" in the system (the one dubbed "electoral representative democracy") on either side – only that this contingent alone is not sufficient. In *the lying competition*, this time around, the limits of credulity among the governed were tested... and exceeded by the democrats. Next time, maybe, the slightly soiled rich will prevail over the filthy sort. Maybe…

2. See the U.S. Cyber Security and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and our discussion here.
3. A corollary of *Mk* 14:7.

In the next two years, the world will celebrate the first of a new class: the *trillionaire*. As of late 2024, Elon Musk's wealth is increasing at an average rate of $2.3 million per hour, 24 hours day, 7 days a week... Needless to say, due to the way money works at this scale, even this rate will accelerate. The wealth of Musk's nearest competitors, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg, *combined*, is still less than half of Musk's. Musk overtly backed Donald Trump. Bezos and Zuckerberg, who were once a bit on the fence, are warming up to Trump. (Bezos expressed his admiration for how Trump handled having his ear pierced with a bullet.) Many of the rest of the less privileged class of billionaires, the "poor-rich," (e.g., Soros) still support democrats. It's true that there are many more among the "poor-rich" than in 200+ billion club (which, at present, consists of only the three mentioned). But the wealth of the "poor-rich" is spread too thinly to matter much anymore. The widening income/wealth gap between the "poor-rich" and the "rich-rich" is likely to determine future governance... Again, I wager none of this is about us.

Trump will go down in history as perhaps the most savvy politician in electoral history. You may have the loftiest *vision* and the greatest administrative *skill* together with the best *will* in the world, but in an *electoral* democracy consisting of *millions*, none of this matters without understanding how to motivate the masses to vote for you, which, in turn, will make you the darling of those with resources to trade for access to effective power.[4] In a large democracy, the masses do get a voice in *who* will exploit them.

...

In conclusion, again, consider reading the full argument for why Trump won and why more like him will win in the future. But, if you don't have the time and want to connect the dots for yourself, a good place to start is with this 40 minute lecture by political scientist Martin Gilens, from 2015.

The fate of free expression

No doubt Trump will try to curtail free speech to suit his causes. And likely he will get some support from the Supreme Court on this constitutional matter since the Court has been moving for quite awhile in the direction of removing impediments to executive aggrandizement.

In fact, Biden has benefited from this move as well. As when, a few months ago, his administration was accused of impeding and obstructing free speech about Covid-19 information as well as criticism of his foreign policy. The Court ruled *for* Biden. *This* Trump-friendly court supported Biden on *this* score.

We can only imagine how much more the Court will erode the First Amendment at Trump's bidding.[5]

Every President in recent times has tried to limit free speech and sometimes succeeded. The Court has been generally friendly to the idea. The "national security" mantra is typically trotted out (Edward Snowden, Julian Assange...), and even health policy will be construed as a matter of "national security" if it suits those who will materially benefit by the designation.

Congress *could* do something about executive aggrandizement if it wanted to. It could pass a new amendment doubling down on the sacredness of free speech. They might start with making it *absolute:*

4. See "Reform, or else Magical thinking about democracy: part 5" for why "electoral" and "millions" are italicized.
5. Trump on free speech – the ACLU view. Biden on free speech – Free Speech Center and "Suit alleging suppression of free speech [by Biden and company] met with skepticism at U.S. Supreme Court," *Idaho Capital Sun*, 2024.

no excuses, no appeals to national security or epistemic prejudgements… *What qualifies those who make these discriminations?* If people want to believe Columbus discovered America, the earth is not flat, nor spherical, but a geoid with the consistency of "pebble poop," or that the Pope is a closet Hindu, let them. The truth will win out. J.S. Mill, one of the most important thinkers on this subject, thought so. He offered the most cogent argument for why freedom of expression is *critical* to effective *democratic* governance. But maybe Mill was wrong. Maybe "deplorables" will *never* grasp the significance of truth? We'll see...

More controversially, if people want to believe there was a lab leak, that national and international health agencies are in the pockets of Big Pharma, that Eisenhower was all wrong to warn us of Military-Industrial Complex, that there is difference between a president being "alone together" with a woman versus being "together alone" with her, that health insurance is driven first and foremost by concern for the health and well-being of the insured *and not profit*, that the Democrats were running a child sex ring from a pizza parlor, maybe even a child slave colony on Mars, again, let them.

After all, most American still believe the U.S. is a democracy against all the evidence.

Needless to say, the unanimity required to make free speech sacred is remote. I don't think Congress – the only governmental body empowered to do so – will protect the principle of free speech until things get much worse. Maybe not even then. Or maybe Trump will be the occasion???

...

What happens when a democracy *believing* itself a democracy (even incorrectly) *stops* believing it?

Trump's bluffery and Mexico

Trump is, by now, a known quantity. *Or should be.* Hardly a day has passed in the last eight years when his name has not been in the news. Even when he was *not* in office, nobody could stop talking about him. The fallout of January 6th, the endless law suits, accusations left and right... Hasn't it occurred to anyone that all this attention only strengthened Trump's position?

By now, a pattern should be transparent to our understanding of Trump. I think we are entitled to characterize his *modus operandi* as the opposite of another famous Republican (a progressive one, on most accounts): Teddy Roosevelt. Trump's shtick is "speak loudly and carry a small stick."

Trump loves, above all, drama. He was an actor after all. The fact that his bluffery has worked as well it has speaks more to the desperation of his audience than to his talent or shining integrity. He enjoys his bluffery and revels in its power to incite. But, in practice, he is more pragmatic. He is not fundamentally ideological (he used to be a Democrat, remember?) – narcissist, yes, but he knows who butters his toast. A "moron," maybe (as Rex Tillerson, his first Secretary of State muttered), but his political instincts are sharp.

Witness his reaction to Mexico's newly elected president Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo. Within 24 hours of Trump's tariff threat, she penned a message, politely advising him that tariffs were not a good idea, firmly expressing that Mexico is in a position to play this game, too. And that it would not go well for

either country if tariff talk got serious. There is more trade between Mexico and the U.S. than between the U.S. and any other country in the world, Canada just having been displaced in this role. Moreover, as anyone informed on Mexico's rapidly rising economic power knows, Mexico has diversified alliances with China, the rest of Asia,[6] Europe, and much of the developing world, having, for a long time, chosen a less contentious foreign policy than the U.S. – *all while the U.S. is bleeding trillions on foreign wars*. Since her party's ascendancy – itself thanks in large part to her phenomenally successful predecessor in the office, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (aka, AMLO), a populist from the left, and with whom she was long associated – Mexico is on an economic and political roll.

Sheinbaum, age 62, is a formidable woman on many levels, a former professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in environmental science, part of a committee which a decade earlier won the Nobel prize for their efforts on climate crisis strategies, former successful mayor of Mexico City, a *city* with a population of 26 million people, about the same as all the Scandinavian countries combined. A city whose mayoral office's responsibility and power is second only to the presidency of the nation. She has managed to excel at both her academic and political careers. Sheinbaum earned an undergraduate degree in physics at UNAM in 1989, her masters in 1994, and a Ph.D. in energy engineering in 1995. She completed the work for her doctorate at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California.

She is the first person of Jewish descent to win the presidency of a still largely Roman Catholic country, not to mention *the first woman in the highest office of any North American state*. She won the presidency, even against a stick-figure woman competitor, with a *resounding mandate* not known in recent times anywhere else in North America.[7]

The resounding mandate places her in a much more secure place than Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and her quick, assured reaction to his provocation caused Trump to back off his demands on Mexico in favor of shifting his bluster at intimidating Trudeau, whose political precarity invited it. Sheinbaum does not lead a country nearly as divided as either Canada or the U.S. *Forbes Magazine* named her the 4th most powerful woman in the world for 2024.

After she read him the riot act, Trump described her as a "lovely... wonderful woman…"
Sheinbaum acknowledged the complement graciously.

6. Mexico is building one of the largest ports in the world on its Pacific Coast, specifically to handle Asian trade. And it is well along in its plan to connect a port on each coast with high-speed freight rail to compete with the floundering capacity of the Panama Canal. Mexico's strategic geographical place is discussed in this short documentary, "How Mexico is creating its own Panama Canal."

7. For perspective, imagine a female Bernie Sanders winning the US presidency against the combined forces of Democrats *and* Republicans in a landslide. The MORENA party, headed by Sheinbaum and her predecessor AMLO, has decimated the near century-long hold of the corrupt alliance between the two major parties in Mexico, the PRI and PAN, in a bloodless revolution. Perhaps, there is hope and a lesson here for the U.S. Who knows how long Mexico's luck will last, but for the foreseeable future, Mexico is the exception to the decline in the credibility of democracy nearly everywhere in the Western world. Few world leaders, if any, at this time, enjoy more popular support than Sheinbaum.

Trump's bluff was called by a woman.[8] Like most[9] of those he has strategically aligned himself with in the soon-to-be-*trillionaire* class, he is not about to risk the support of this class whose interest centers on whatever *materially* benefits it – *neither ideas nor pride.* Populism, nationalism, widespread discontent, etc. are fit instruments to this end.

Populism: Trump vs Sheinbaum[10]

Things to consider in deciding how seriously to take Trump's bluffery; some of which were addressed (more diplomatically) by Sheinbaum in her response to Trump; some are my interpretation of events:

- The U.S. has a drug problem.
- Where do you think the Cartels get their guns *and* the billions of dollars to buy them? Not from Mexico, *from the U.S.*
- People are dying in Mexico because of those guns.[11]
- People are dying in the U.S. because of those drugs.

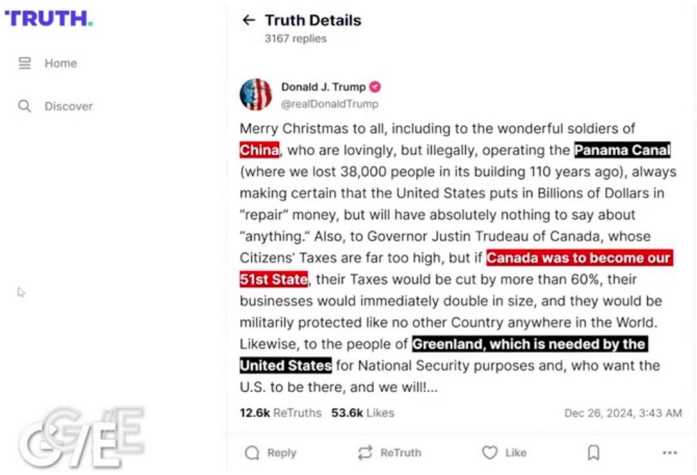
---

8. It's ironic that terms like "macho" and "machismo" come from Mexican Spanish. No country of such economic and political stature in the world, not even in Scandinavia anymore, has such a *woman-dominated* government. The Mexican Congress is majority female. Its judiciary is on the verge of becoming so as well, partly in virtue of recent reforms: its members shall henceforth be elected, not appointed – notwithstanding the unsuccessful meddling of the U.S. to prevent this.
9. Elon Musk may be the exception, RFK, Jr. too. It seems to me Musk is driven by a vision he genuinely holds that does not reduce to *mere* power concentration. He wants to combat the very real threat of human extinction on humanitarian grounds. He thinks civilization and the humans that created it are in danger of vanishing and the only solution is human proliferation expansion *to no end:* not just Greenland, but Mars, other planetary systems… the sky is literally the limit. "We will pursue our manifest destiny into the stars…" said Trump, inspired (and funded) by Musk. Humans are special and a blessing to the universe. Unlimited concentration of material power is a means to this end. Hence, Musk's *pronatalism*. Trump is not capable of such expansive thinking. Musk is *using* Trump and Trump is *using* Musk. *Trump is having fun.* (I don't agree with Musk's estimation of the unconditional value of humanity, but I understand his ethical impulse. He's hardly alone.)

I also don't believe RFK, Jr. has sold out to the forces of corruption inherent to power concentrations. Trump recruited him because of his subversive anti-corporatist appeal. He comes closer than any, even remotely, viable political figure to having actual, as opposed to *lip-servicing,* "progressive" ideals. Trump wanted to draw from discontent on the left as well as the right. RFK, Jr. fit the bill from the left. Kennedy, for his part, is using Trump to get placed in a position to break the stranglehold of corporate powers over issues central to him. Will RFK, Jr. succeed? I doubt it, he'll be sacked soon, his utility for Trump may already have been exhausted, but I think RFK, Jr. will try where no one else has. Musk and RFK, Jr. have ideals (defensible or not) that Trump doesn't have. The mainstream Democrats seem bereft of any – *thinking the country is just fine how it is going.* Isn't this what they used to call "conservatism"? The mainstream democrats' attempt to co-op the label "progressive" by focusing on morally luxurious wokishness has worn thin. (At some abstract or theoretical level, I have defended the wokish endgame on moral development grounds, but humans, as we know them, have a great deal more evolution to do before they grasp where this will lead. At best, it will lead to *graceful* extinction. This is a wistful fear. More likely, a ruder sort will forestall such an outcome.)
10. A discussion in English about this: "Mexico rejects Trump threats as Ottawa bows to US empire" *Canadian Foreign Policy Institute* and Talking Foreign Policy interview with Mexico City based journalist José Luis Granados Ceja.
11. Mexico has had one of the highest murder rates in the world. 70% of the guns confiscated in Mexico come from the U.S. If there were no drug trade, the rate would drop well below that of the U.S. Yet, even so, excepting your participation in the drug trade or association with one who is (even as journalist reporting on it), you are safer living in Mexico. A "gringo style" murder is one where the targets are random, unarmed innocents. School shootings are almost unheard of in Mexico. "Covering 'Gringo-Style' Shootings in Mexico, What American gun violence looks like to reporters who have to deal with a very different kind of threat," Javier Garza Ramos, *Nieman Reports*, 2022.

- What is so terrible about living in the U.S. that people need such vast quantities of drugs in order to stand it?[12] (Sheinbaum, herself, was too polite to say this explicitly, but many people in Mexico have been asking for awhile.)
- Mexico has been working hard to stop illegal border-crossing into the U.S. – the second largest border between any two nations in the world. What has the U.S. done to help? Who are these desperate people trying to cross? Where do they come from? A large portion come from countries, whose governments, the U.S. has spent billions trying to destabilize, such as Venezuela, Haiti, and, most recently, Ecuador. The majority are *not* Mexican.[13] According to U.S. sources, way back in 2014, the number of migrants entering *from* the U.S. to seek residency *in* Mexico *for financial reasons* (not tourists) *exceeded* the number of Mexican citizens entering the U.S. for the same reasons. The era when Mexican citizens sought to immigrate to the U.S. for a better life ended sometime ago. Again, *more American citizens are moving to Mexico than the reverse for financial reasons.* Most of these are still retirees but younger digital nomads are increasingly swelling their ranks. Why are so many *young* U.S. Citizens seeking economic opportunities in Mexico?
- Why does Trump threaten to violate Mexico's sovereignty by sending U.S. troops across the border ostensibly to hunt down the cartel? There will be hell to pay if he does that, as we can be sure, there would be if Mexico invaded U.S. territory to shut down its arms manufacturers.
- Why did Trump attempt to build a wall at the Mexican border?[14] Or float the ideas of appropriating Greenland? or absorbing Canada? or repossessing, illegally, the Panama Canal?

Because he must think all these are *low-hanging fruit*, and, if this were true, it would make good *business* sense. There are vast resources just begging to be extracted from under those conveniently melting glaciers. (Climate change? "There's money to be made, notwithstanding that climate change *isn't real,"* Trump must be ribbing Musk. Trump must think Greenland "might be made green again, or for the first time.") Greenland is a protectorate of Denmark, and what is Denmark going to do about it?


TRUTH.
Home
Discover
Truth Details
3167 replies
Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump
Merry Christmas to all, including to the wonderful soldiers of China, who are lovingly, but illegally, operating the Panama Canal (where we lost 38,000 people in its building 110 years ago), always making certain that the United States puts in Billions of Dollars in "repair" money, but will have absolutely nothing to say about "anything." Also, to Governor Justin Trudeau of Canada, whose Citizens' Taxes are far too high, but if Canada was to become our 51st State, their Taxes would be cut by more than 60%, their businesses would immediately double in size, and they would be militarily protected like no other Country anywhere in the World. Likewise, to the people of Greenland, which is needed by the United States for National Security purposes and, who want the U.S. to be there, and we will!...
12.6k ReTruths 53.6k Likes
Dec 26, 2024, 3:43 AM
Reply
ReTruth
Like
One month after his threats to invade Mexico and Sheinbaum's response... note reference to Mexico is missing.

12. Over the 9 year period between 2009 and 2018 there were 288 shool shootings in the U.S. The population of the U.S. is about 2.5 times that of Mexico. If the rate of school shootings over the period was the same for both countries, we would expect the number of school shootings in Mexico to be about 115 in that period. *Instead, it was 8.* A child is about 14 times more likely to be killed in school in the U.S. than in Mexico. "School Shootings by Country 2024," *World Population Review.*

13. According to the Council of Foreign Relations stats for 2024, 308,000 of those crossing from Mexico into the U.S. are from Mexico while 494,000 are from countries *outside* Mexico: Guatemala, Venezuela, Cuba, Ecuador, Colombia, Honduras, Haiti, El Salvador, Peru, Nicaragua, and Brazil – *the governments of virtually all of these the U.S. has an extended track record of subverting*.

14. Which, as of today, is still more than three-quarters unwalled. Kamala Harris, who once thought it was a waste of billions, later, thought better. Former president of Mexico Vicente Fox pointed out there are advanced technologies whose plans can be freely downloaded from the dark web to defeat Trump's wall: one such is called a "ladder."

Unless, of course, the cost of doing this sort of business comes in too high. In the case of interfering with Mexico's sovereignty, the U.S. will be surprised at the bill. Again, Claudia is *not* the leader of a nation with a *severely divided* electorate as Justin[15] and Donald are. This makes a huge difference in how willing people will be to back up their leader if push comes to shove.

In the end, it comes to this. Trump is an opportunist. If he can, he will. But he's not so stupid as to endanger his standing. *Remember, he thrives on drama, so long as the play ends with him looking heroic, all's well.*[16] Moreover, if he succeeds at arrogating the listed resources, it will be because he is backed by Musk and company. Musk, at least, is going to do what makes good business sense. Low-hanging fruit, of course. The rest? – we'll have to see what a cost/benefit analysis says…

But Claudia has a record of not being easily daunted. This and her popularity no doubt reinforce each other. Besides, on at least one score, she and Trump are okay with each other: they are both *populists* – Sheinbaum, the more successful one (as was her predecessor, AMLO), neither is an ideologue.

A lesson for the U.S.

Historians are among the most cynical of academics. When you see the same thing happen over and over again, it's almost superhuman *not* to expect it to happen *still again*. Induction has a powerful hold on our thinking for evolutionary reasons. A child learns after just one instance of trying that trying to touch a candle flame a *second* time is not a good idea.

Since ancient times, philosophers, such as Plato, have fathomed political arrangements looking for patterns. There are only *three logically possible* schemes for governing large groups of people: rule by one, some, or all – that is, autocracy, oligarchy, or democracy (with many variants, of course). The trouble is, states cycle between these. Power in humans societies is never static. Each of these inevitably degrade or upgrade into one or the other of the two. Even the odd benevolent monarch seldom transmits their benevolence to the next generation. Oligarchs will privilege the ones who share their interests over others the way "family" is used to excuse treating strangers differently. Democracies, comprised of the uninformed and uneducated, reduce to a rabble and then anarchy – the pitchfork or guillotine stage, until, tiring of this, sue for tyranny (*a la* Hobbes) or tribalism, then (barring something new, like AI governance), it starts all over again.

But unlike historians, philosophers are not typically *quite* as cynical: they tend to hold out wishfully for logical *possibility* in the face of the inevitability of historical induction: *probability.* Maybe, *just maybe*, something new may happen next time. Maybe the candle flame will surprise next time...

Populism is a blanket term for governance that accepts a mix of human traits. It makes no unconditional claims. It admits to being less than ideal, does not aspire to universality, while nevertheless seeks a balance between real, native, sometimes unabashedly contradictory, human vices:

---

15. Within a few days of the completion of this writeup, Justin Trudeau resigned as Prime Minister of Canada.
16. The idea of a monument in Washington D. C. commemorating Trump alongside Lincoln's and Washington's is already in the conception stage. It will likely feature the iconic rendering of Trump, surrounded by secret service agents, his ear bleeding, fist in the air, and the U.S. flag behind him. *The symbolic force of that (Iwo Jima-resonant) image cannot be underestimated.* It shows how serious Trump is about looking heroic. The drama is over the top. It almost makes one think Trump himself staged the attempted assassination. How many democrats have shown such a passion to impress? How could they think their lame gaslighting could compete with this?

the need to *belong*, to have *status*, to have a *voice*, to *believe* in something, to *acknowledge* that there may be others who believe in something different, but though you may not join them in their beliefs, at least you *understand* something important about them, namely that, though theirs are not your values, you, at least, *get* their need to have a set of values of some sort. Populism is a *bottom-up* governance. As opposed to, say, Plato's vision of an informed top-down kind. Populism often encompasses forms of nationalism which gives people a sense of belonging. It can be toxic, e.g., National Socialist (Nazism) or Fascist. But it might also be more level-headed and pragmatic, as in the sentiment behind the idea that "good fences make good neighbors." The U.S., during its isolationist period prior to World War I, fit this description as some nations do to this day, such as Switzerland, which have made *armed neutrality*[17] into a cardinal principle. Mexico has been playing its cards rather astutely in recent times, something it behooves the U.S. to take notice of.

Trump is a populist of the less savory Western type if we can believe his rhetoric. In Mexico, we presently have a populist regime that is related to, but different from, Trump's. It is rooted in leftist ideals – but not wholly from European sources. It attempts an amalgam of values and ideas, 500 years in the making from Europe, yes, but also from ancient pre-Columbian traditions on the indigenous side. Mexico has been through hell several times more than most of the rest of North America. The U.S. Civil war of the 1860s was the bloodiest in U.S. history because it was fought on U.S. soil by Americans against Americans using the beginnings of modern weapons. Mexico has had *three* such bloody convulsions in a history twice as long – its own civil war more than *twice* as bloody… *If* nations are capable of *learning*, Mexico has had more occasions for it than the U.S.

"A sarcastic statue dedicated to Jan. 6, 2021, insurrectionists was unveiled in front of the Capitol on Thursday morning. The piece features a bronze-shaped pile of poop resting atop a desk with California Rep. Nancy Pelosi's (D) name above a short paragraph explaining the monument." The sarcasm is so subtle, it's unclear which party was satirizing which...

One important difference between populist values – whether right or left – and "neo-liberal" priorities is that the issues that matter are not the decadent ones driving wokism, identity politics, etc. A high level of material security is required to fret much over those. Give people assurance that their physical existence counts for something *first* before trying to get them worked up over whether gender is a state of mind... We will return to this point when we discuss Simone Weil and her confrontation with Simone de Beauvoir, later...

...

Here is a pattern we observe from history:

1. Empires come to an end violently, *or*

17. The core idea derives from Kierkegaard. It refers to a conceptual stance *before* any worldly power disaffiliation. To be armed *and* neutral is to attempt to preserve your individual integrity in the face of an onslaught of caustic social forces that would dissolve and reduce you to constituents whose only relation to you was that you were their vehicle – for as long as possible but without illusions of success. These forces foster and thrive on illusion. You would rather not.

2. they crumble from inside *and*

    a. *either* manage some stability for awhile[18] by becoming more modest and cooperative, *or*

    b. are absorbed and subjugated by other empires

3. until the same happens to these, and so on...[19]

Extended writeup for the topic hosted at
The Philosophy Club in December 2024
Accessible at Archive.org

– Victor Muñoz
Guanajuato / Seattle

18. I say “for awhile” because luck has much to do with even this much success. Doing everything “right” is no guarantee of anything whether we are addressing individuals or communities.
19. See, for instance, “How Empires Fall and Why the US is Next,” *uncivilized*, December 2024.